

Message Text

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ACTION TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9520

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15672

PASS DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE AND TREASURY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEWT, UR, US

SUBJ: SOVIET COMMENT ON PROPOSED US-SOVIET JOINT COMMERCIAL
COMMISSION MEETING, OCT 21-22

REF: STATE 236171

SUMMARY. DEPUTY ASSISTANCE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE DOWNEY WAS TOLD BY
SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIALS OCT 4 THAT THE USSR HAS "NOT YET"
AGREED TO THE PROPOSED OCT 21-22 DATES FOR MEETING OF JOINT
COMMERICAL COMMISSION. WHILE A POTENTIAL SCHEDULE CONFLICT WITH
THE CANADIANS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN REMOVED, THERE WAS SOME SOVIET
SKEPTICISM ABOUT VALUE OF A MEETING JUST BEFORE U.S. ELECTIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE ALEKSEY MANZHULO TOLD
DOWNEY DURING ENERAL DISCUSSION (SEPTTEL) THAT USSR HAS "NOT YET"
APGREED TO THE DATES PROPOSED BY THE U.S. FOR A MEETING OF THE U.S.
SOVIET JOINT COMMERICAL COMMISSION, OCT 21-22. SUBSEQUENTLY,
HOWEVER, MANZHULO TOLD DOWNEY DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION THAT
SOVIETS HAVE INVITED CANADIAN COMMERCIAL DELEGATION TO MOSCOW ON
MARCH 25 (A DATE WHICH WOULD PERMIT SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES TO
PARTICIPATE IN EARLIER WASHINGTON MEETING AND TO RETURN HOME
OVER THE WEEKEND).

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2. ONE SOVIET TRADE OFFICIAL COMMENTED TO DOWNEY AT LUNCH THAT SOVIETS DOUBTED UTILITY OF A JOINT COMMISSION MEETING SO CLOSE BEFORE THE U.S. ELECTIONS. HIS COMMENT DID NOT, HOWEVER, GO SO FAR AS SUGGEST THAT SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S SKEPITICISM WOULD LEAD IT TO ASK FOR POSTPONEMENT.
MATLOCK

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